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MURRAY'S EYE-OPENER

AN ATTEMPT AT A LOGICAL, LEGAL,
HISTORICAL AND ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
CHRISTIAN SUPERSTITION.

NORMAN MURRAY.



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MURRAY'S EYE-OPENER.

The great difficulty in handling this complex problem is the different points of view from which the extreme opponents and defenders of Christianity take up the question.

Many on both sides take up the question as if it involved the whole question of Religion. The fact of the matter is that Christianity is only a Religion and a very indefinite Religion at that. The central point in Christianity is, of course, the person, character and teachings of Jesus Christ. Some people take up the question, "Was there ever such a person as Jesus Christ?" I shall attempt to prove that there never was such a person as the Christ of the Church—The only begotten Son of God Who became man and was sacrificed as an atonement for the transgression of the law of God by the human race. That there was a certain person and that his name was Jesus and that he was put to death may be granted for the following reasons: (1) That a society calling itself Christian existed shortly after the accepted date of the execution of Jesus may be granted from the fact that early Roman historians referred to the society called Christians and the accusations brought against them. (2) The execution of a person, again is a fact much more capable of proof by ordinary legal methods than the character, teachings and motives of that person.

That we have no definite information about the character, teachings or motives of Jesus may be proved as follows:—
(1) The four Gospels contradict each other in many places.
(2) The Apocryphal New Testament which was just as authoritative in the early Church as the accepted New Testament, would increase the number of contradictions.
(3) From references in the writings of the early fathers of the Church to many other Gospels and Epistles now lost, we may reasonably come to the conclusion that if we had them in addition to the accepted Gospels and the Apocryphal New Testament the contradictions would be still more numerous.

Now, to test this matter the same as any other debatable question, let us start with the following " axiom":—When two or more contradictory accounts of the same events are given it is possible for all them to be wrong but it is impossible for all them to be correct. We have two genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke entirely different, both as to the number of ancestors between Jesus and David as well as an entirely different list of names in each. Now, it is absolutely impossible for both of these to be correct, so it is quite possible that both are wrong in whole or in part. Besides, if Jesus had no earthly father he had no ancestors at all. It is quite evident, therefore, that both the writers who gave an ancestry to Jesus were not supporting the theory of the mysterious supernatural conception. The four Gospels give four entirely different versions of the accusation said to have been written by Pilate above Jesus on the cross. Authors who were capable of making such mistakes in plain matters of fact are naturally even more unreliable when they relate discourses. In any case, if anything is at all clear about the teachings and character of Jesus it is that he was hostile to the priests and rich of his day, therefore he did not belong in any sense whatever and does not belong now to the wealthy so-called Christian organizations that have used his name for so many ages for monetary and political purposes.

The chief use the Church has made of Jesus was by the atonement theory. Now, there is no theory more repulsive to any person with any sense of moral justice than the theory of punishing one person for the guilt of another. While man may be influenced by love and fear no country has ever applied the method of punishing the innocent for the guilty in ordinary human laws. This is a case where Religion has no analogy to reason and common sense.

Let us next take up the question of miracles. Thaumaturgy is evidence against instead of being in favor of Christianity. Ethics do not need thaumaturgy to illustrate the value of moral teachings. As has been well pointed out by Hume and Paine we have no experience of such violation of the laws of nature taking place as is recorded in the Bible but we have

any amount of experience of human falsehood, credulity and delusion, therefore it is much more reasonable to attribute these so-called miracles to fraud and delusion than to accept them as facts.

Some of Hume's critics tried to make the point that the Maker of laws could change the laws to suit the occasion which would, in fact, make what we call miracles after all conform to laws. John Stuart Mills answered that those who tried to make that point must show cause why the ordinary laws of nature should be abrogated, but they have so far failed to do so.

From Jesus, let us go back to the Hebrew people. To say the least, it is very strange that the Supreme Ruler of the earth should take His specially chosen people out of a plentiful and fruitful country like Egypt to die from hunger and thirst in the wilderness. Furthermore, as Thomas Paine has well said, "Even if Moses did get a revelation it was only a revelation to himself and only hearsay to all the rest of the world. In any case it does not claim to be for any other people but the Hebrews. It is not claimed for Moses that he wished to give a message from God to reform or to give laws to any other people than the children of Israel."

Our knowledge of races and climates now teaches us that the dietary and social laws of the ancient Hebrews and other races still living in Syria and surrounding countries are not by any means the kind of laws best suited for Northern peoples of other races and other times.

When Orthodox people are cornered at every other point they fall back on the beauty of monotheism and that we owe this beautiful theory to the Jews. The fact of the matter is that polytheism is much more suitable to a free people than monotheism. With the monotheistic idea, people are apt to quarrel about the nature of their God, and as the one knows just much or as little about the nature of any being, great or small, outside of the range of human knowledge as the other, it is much more sensible for people to accept different names for their different ideas about some being greater than themselves.

than first to agree that there is only one God and then to start to quarrel about the nature of that God.

Now this brings us to the disturbing question of atheism. All orthodox people say they base their belief in God on the Bible. Now the strange thing about this is that the Bible does not give any scientific or philosophical reasons for believing in God or gods, like Cicero, Voltaire and Thomas Paine. The Bible is addressed to a people who had already a belief in God or gods.

I have read a lot of twaddle by people who call themselves atheists, and still emphatically deny that they ever said that there was no God. Now, the fact of the matter is that language being mostly arbitrary sounds to express certain ideas, always mean what the public understand by it, and no amount of explanation on the part of these people will make the public change the meaning they attach to the word. Ingersoll said that an honest God was the noblest work of man. My personal conclusion is that the Bible conception of God is the worst type in all human experience. The watch and the design argument is at least worth discussing, but the Hebrew God ought to be given his passport outside of the borders of modern civilization as soon as possible.

It is hard to say anything on the subject better than Spencer's "Unknowable."

Just one word in parting to the atheistic crank. If you convince your public that there is no God, there is no more use for books on the subject, which means an end to the most interesting of all fiction to a large portion of humanity—the God fiction.

Now, let us touch on the Bible as a book of ethics. How can you teach the rising generation to be moral by immoral examples? How can you talk about the All-Wise loving God who created man innocent and perfect and then left him at the mercy of two evil disposed beings like the orthodox devil and a talking snake? How do you expect to extract morals out of the lives of Lot, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and David? O! the ten commandments and the Psalms, I hear the horrified

orthodox say. The same man that is supposed to have given the Commandment, Thou sh^t not kill! was a murderer himself and also ordered a wholesale slaughter.

The clergy tell those who don't know any better that modern civilization is based on the Bible. I ask them, and wait for an answer, "How is it that heathen Greece and Rome legalized monogamy, while Hebrew theocracy legalized Polygamy, and how was it that the old Germanic tribes, as we learn from Caesar and Tacitus, practised chastity to a degree unknown among ancient Hebrews and modern Christians in the same countries under Christian teaching?"

O Priests! Priests! if there is a day of judgment after death you have much to answer for. How are we ever to forget this demoralizing superstition? (1st) by adopting Euclid's system of "Reductio ad absurdum," and then try to forget it, and to teach the rising generation some more moral fables—Aesop's, for example—than is demoralizing literature called the Bible. Let us forgive Jesus if we can. He did not accomplish anything. Let us rather study the life of Voltaire, who helped to free his country from superstition, also the life and writings of Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll. If Jesus said that people ought to hate father, mother, brother and sister, wife and children to become His disciples, it says very little for the common sense of the first apostles; if He did not say so, He ought to instruct His modern disciples, if He is still in communication with them, to cease libelling Him. We do not know whether He said so or not, let us be more charitable to His memory than His professed disciples, and put that expression down as an interpolation by some scheming priest, who was desirous of increasing his own authority over an ignorant public. There are some excellent maxims attributed to Jesus, and we have no record that He gathered up riches from deluded mortals who are promised rewards in another world like modern priesthood. If they had anything to say about man's place in any world beyond the grave, they would do exactly as they do in this one—keep the best places for themselves, and let the unfortunate victims shift for themselves.

WHAT DO YOU GIVE US?

What do you offer instead of what you are taking away from us? we are often asked. The fact of the matter is, no rationalist is trying to take anything away from you. He is not advocating the making of any laws to prevent you from praying to or worshipping Jesus. You are the parties who are taking something from others. You are not satisfied with liberty to rest on the Sabbath and worship Jesus; you also make laws to curtail the liberties of other people who do not wish to worship Jesus. You directly and indirectly make others pay for a show in which they do not wish to take part. Therefore the rationalist is justified in giving his reasons for not joining in your worship or paying for those who conduct the performance. While you profess to love your enemies, you do all the injury you can directly and indirectly to those who do not believe in the efficacy of your performance.

Why should any one quarrel with his neighbor for a difference of opinion about what did or did not take place two thousand years ago, three or four thousand miles away? Your Religion is full of contradictions. You ought to know that a man cannot be made to believe anything by tyranny and coercion. You make a man a hypocrite by frightening him to give a verbal consent to what you tell him to save trouble, but you ought to know that that is not the proper way to convince one of the truth of your religion. Besides, if God loves mankind and if He wants them to love and worship His, can't He teach them so, the same as He makes the sun to shine and the rain to fall without your assistance. Can't He give us a revelation now to suit the occasion without forcing us by pains and penalties to believe in things that you know no more about than we do. In fact, you don't know anything about the matter at all—you only think you do. They were impressed on your mind in early youth by interested parties, the same as a writing is made on a piece of paper or on a slate, and you had no choice in the matter. (Locke.)

'All well informed people know now that man lived on the earth more than six thousand years, that there is no reason

whatever to believe that the world was created in six days of twenty-four hours each, that there was no universal deluge, that the sun does not move around the earth, and that the laws of nature were not interfered with to please Joshua or any one else, that it is absolutely ridiculous to talk about a man living three days in the belly of a fish in the sea. What is the object in teaching innocent children these foolish yarns as facts? What kind of conception have you got of an omnipotent being, all wise, powerful and good, who can be influenced by your foolish flattery? If He is influenced by praise, He is not unchangeable as the Catechism says He is. Then you want to know what you can get in place of all this nonsense? Let me tell you. If you really want to know something about people worth knowing something about in the olden times in Europe and Asia, read Herodotus. His history is a great deal more amusing, interesting and instructive than the miscellaneous collection of pamphlets called the Bible; read Plato, the biographer of the good and noble Socrates—read Tacitus, there you will find more about your own ancestors, if you are of European origin, than you will find in the Bible—read Caesar, Cicero, Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious men—Homer and Virgil, Juvenal, and a whole host of others, that are now all translated into all modern languages. These were the people that speculated about such interesting themes as life beyond the grave and immortality of the soul. The early Christians copied their ideas about these matters from such authors as we have referred to. They certainly did not find such ideas as they have been preaching in either Moses or the Hebrew Prophets. Moses and the Hebrew Prophets were too materialistic to speculate about these things. What can an insignificant mortal like ourselves do for you or me after we shuffle off this mortal coil? Nothing. It is pure bluff and a confidence game and is corrupting the human race. Take a glance at the history of Christianity, the murder of Hypatia, the early wars of the Athanasians and Arians about the foolish doctrine of the Trinity in the time of the monster Constantine, who first amalgamated Paganism and Christianity, thereby corrupting both of them. Read the history of the Popes, the bloody Inquisition, the war between

false Theology and Science, the martyrdom of Bruno and Savonarola, the wars of extermination between Catholics and Protestants, the long civil war still going on between the established Church, Catholics and Dissenters in the British Isles; What is responsible for the everlasting trouble in unfortunate Ireland? Christian superstition. Now let me give you a few choice texts out of your Holy Bible. Compare them with Aristotle's beautiful ethics—"the greatest good is happiness and the means to that end an active, virtuous life."

Truth is struck out in the clash between two conflicting opinions.

Come out in the open, and fight fair.

Rationalists don't want to injure you—they fight in open daylight, while a great part of your work is done by contemptible scheming in the dark:

If anyone asks you what about the supposed miraculous conception and resurrection of Jesus, I may say that these points are included and disposed of under miracles. It is pure mythology—not ethics, and not worthy of serious consideration. The most serious matter about Bible teachings in any case, is the evil influence Old Testament stories always have, on those who read them—like dime novels and penny dreadfuls. In what way, please tell me, will the study of the history of the ancient Hebrew people solve our modern social and economic problems? The Hebrew, since we first heard of him, has been a disturbing element in every country that has ever been inflicted with his unwelcome presence in any large numbers. Yet our missionaries are now disturbing the Chinese who have succeeded to manage their own affairs for countless ages much better than the Hebrews ever succeeded in doing.

CHOICE BIBLE TEXTS.

It is to be noted that, according to the etiquette of modern so-called civilized society, several notable Bible texts are not fit to be printed for general circulation, except by the Bible Society. How long society will put up with this kind of humbuggery, it is hard to say. If I had the means at my disposal I would certainly make a test case against the Bible.

Society for circulating obscene literature. Here follows some interesting Bible texts—look them up in your Bibles. For the reasons given above only references to some of them are given.

NOTABLE CONTRADICTIONS.

Sixth Commandment—"Thou shalt not kill." — Ex. 20, v. 13.

Wholesale slaughter of both Hebrews and heathen commanded.—Ex. 32, v. 27. Num. 31, v. 14 to 18

A good poser for a hard shell orthodox—1 Chron. 21, v. 1, and 2 Sam. 24, v. 1.

In one case God causes the mischief and in the other Satan does it. This is one of those cases where the Prophets were not sure whether it was the voice of the father or the voice of the goblin that was speaking.

The character of the man after God's own heart is illustrated in the following passages: 2Sam. 12, v. 13; 1 Chron. 20, v. 3; 1 Sam. 27, v. 9 and 9; and 1 Sam. 25, v. 13; 1 Sam. 18, v. 27; also 2 Sam. ch. 8, v. 2 to 4. As we are told in Kings 15, v. 5, that David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, save in the matter of Uriah, we may presume that all the other bad deeds were pleasing to the Lord. Why the Lord should take such special notice of the affair of Uriah more than other equally abominable transactions, it is hard to say. The key to the whole business may be found in the following two instances as recorded in Joshua 6, v. 17 and 21 and Joshua 7, v. 10-26. It was a holy act to destroy everything that had a breath in Jericho except Rabah the harlot, but because Achan put aside a lump of gold which the priests claimed as their portion he and his family is made a bonfire of.

Gen. 30, v. 15 and 16.—And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes.

And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him and said, Thou must come in unto me for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

Gen. 19, v. 31 to 36—The story of Lot cohabiting with his own daughters.

Hosea, chap. 1, v. 2 and 3; chap. 3, v. 2.—And the Lord said unto Hosea, Go take unto thee a wife of whoredoms; so he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, so I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an Homar of barley and an half homar of barley.

INTERESTING BIBLE TEXTS.

Gen. 38, v. 9. Leviticus 18, v. 7. Deut. 23, v. 1. II Kings 18, v. 27. Isaiah 36, v. 12. Hosea chap. 1, v. 2, chap. 3, v. 2. Ezekiel 4, v. 11 and 12.

Man put to death by Moses' command for gathering a few sticks to make a fire, on the Sabbath Day.—Numbers 15, v. 32-37.

War with Midian and slaughter of men, women and children.—Numbers 31, v. 7-18.

Two different genealogies of Jesus.—Matt. 1 and Luke 3.

Four different versions of the inscription placed above Christ's head at the crucifixion.—Matt. 27, v. 37. Mark 15, v. 26. Luke 23, v. 38. John 19, v. 19.

A very spiritual song.—Song of Solomon, chapter 7, v. 1, 2 and 3.

N.B.—Other select verses will be given with later issues.

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NEWMAN ON BIBLIOLATRY.

“But Bibliolatry not only paralyzes the moral sense, it also corrupts the intellect and introduces a crooked logic by setting men to the duty of extracting absolute harmony out of discordant material.”—Newman's Phases of Faith, page 101.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Leonardo da Vinci
was a man of many
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VITRUVIAN MAN

The Vitruvian Man is a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci. It shows a man in two different ways. In the first way, the man is shown with his arms and legs spread wide, forming a circle. In the second way, the man is shown with his arms and legs bent, forming a square. This drawing is a symbol of the relationship between the human body and the natural world.

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